

REMARKS

The Examiner is failing to appreciate or provide for the vast differences between the present invention, and the art used to reject the claims therein. The reference used to reject claims in the prior Office Action is US patent no. 7,098,942, Nihei, Kaname (hereinafter referred to as "Nihei").

Claim 2, again amended to provide further clarity, has been rejected based upon the "connection to at least one USB equipped computer". The salient feature of the present invention is not the connection to a USB equipped computer; it is the presence of one or more card reader slots residing within a flatbed scanner. The Claim has been amended to more specifically reflect this. Nihei is a photo printing kiosk wherein a user must place coins and if desired may connect a computer to the kiosk using a USB port. This connection requires a user to have a USB cable between the kiosk and their computer or device in which they wish to transfer photographs from to be printed out by the kiosk.

This is vastly different than a flatbed scanner containing one or more card reader slots wherein a user simply inserts their memory device for data transfer and use, and is indeed novel in the art. A USB connection requiring some type of intermediary to transfer data is not analogous to an actual card reader slot. Here the invention claimed is a flatbed scanner with one or more card reader slots, not a USB connection as the Examiner continues to infer.

Regarding Claim 3, the control of operation of the control circuit is accomplished by a user pressing a scanner button which has been designed to be controlled by a proprietary software program wherein there are multiple buttons on the scanner, and each button is programmed to perform a specific task. In the present invention those tasks include sending the data to a fax, an email program, a hard drive, or a printer. This Claim has also been amended to provide clarity. The Nihei references will only perform the function of printing a photograph from data sent to it by a

user who may have their computer or photographic device connected to the USB port of the Nihei kiosk by way of some interface cable. This is not a card reader slot as in the present invention. Further, there is no provision in Nihei for multiple buttons and control circuit application thereto. Nihei in fact only presents a touch screen panel for addressing options for printing a photograph. This is not a rational comparison by any means.

Regarding Claim 4, again, Nihei does not provide a “flatbed scanner containing one or more digital card reader slots” as the Examiner continues to quote. Nihei contains only a USB connection requiring an interface to connect it to a user’s device for the purpose of printing photographic images from the Nihei kiosk. There are no card slots on the Nihei kiosk, and this is an erroneous misquote.

Regarding Claim 7, this Claim has already been amended to exclude the generic form of a flatbed scanner, and now concentrates on claiming the button interface as it relates to directing the scan to result in an email, fax, print job, or archive command as claimed in twice amended Claim 3. The “control” is applied to assigning tasks to the specific buttons on the scanner. The “control” the Examiner applies from Nihei (Fig. 4) is to determine if a dollar has been inserted into the kiosk and whether some type of drive has been connected to it. Then, a display on a touch screen appears and the user may select options for size and style of photograph to be printed out by the kiosk. This is a different application of programmatic “control”, and is limited in function. The present invention control application is of that to multiple buttons on the scanner.

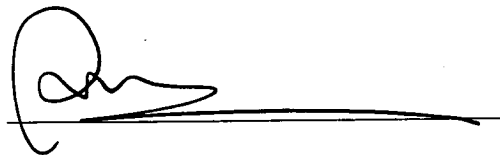
Claim 6 is allowed as the Examiner points out that the record of prior art “does not teach or suggest an image processing method in an image apparatus connected to at least one USB equipped computer, comprising: a) an image input step for inputting image data into a control circuit within said apparatus; b) a transmittal step for sending said image data from said control circuit through the USB system of said computer; c) an interface step for said control circuit to receive instructions

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from, and send data to, control software on said computer upon detection of the insertion of the appropriate media into at least one of a Compact Flash Memory card reader, a Smart Media card reader, a PC or PCMCIA Card reader, a Memory Stick reader, a Multi Media card reader, a Secure Digital card reader, and a IBM Microdrive reader, wherein the inventive software automatically launches a user interface upon insertion and detection thereof and offers one or more user options to process the data without having to press a button on the scanner”.

This Claim encompasses the entire invention in that it covers a scanner containing card reader slots wherein the proprietary software controls the buttons on the scanner, and the user interface launches as a result of mere insertion of a card into said card reader slots. The currently amended claims further specify that the apparatus (the scanner) contain a plurality of buttons wherein the control software applies a function to each button. With the claim amendments providing specificity in relation to the allowed Claim 6, which depends from the previous claims, and the Examiner’s own admission that this Claim is allowed, this Applicant believes that this Application now stands in allowable form and respectfully requests the Application to be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'R' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ron van Os, Applicant



- 1) (Cancelled)
- 2) (Currently Amended) An image acquisition apparatus ~~connected to at least one USB equipped computer~~, comprising: a) one or more digital card reader slots to accept transmittal means for inputting image data into a control circuit within said apparatus; b) transmittal means for sending said image data from said control circuit through the USB system of said computer from one or more digital card reader slots; c) interface means for said control circuit to receive instructions from, and send data to, control software on said computer;
- 3) (Currently Amended) An apparatus as in claim 2, further comprising simple control means for directing complex operations of said control circuit and said control software directly from the outside of said apparatus, said means comprising: a) ~~at least one button~~ a series of buttons on said apparatus wherein said ~~button~~ buttons have has a function determined by said control software indicating that button to direct a scanned image to result in a fax, email, print job or archive command; b) an interface for said button to direct said control circuit and said control software.
- 4) (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 3, wherein said image input means further comprising a flatbed scanner, said scanner containing one or more digital card reader slots which may accommodate at least one of a Compact Memory card reader, a Smart Media card reader, a PC or PCMCIA card reader, a Memory Stick reader, a Multi Media card reader, a Secure Digital card reader, and an IBM Microdrive reader.
- 5) (Cancelled)
- 6) (Previously Presented) An image processing method in an image acquisition apparatus connected to at least one USB equipped computer, comprising: a) an image input step for inputting image data into a control circuit within said apparatus; b) a transmittal step for sending said image data from said control circuit through the USB system of said computer; c) an interface step for said control circuit to receive instructions from, and send data to, control software on said computer upon detection of the insertion of the appropriate media into at least one of a Compact Flash

Memory card reader, a Smart Media card reader, a PC or PCMCIA Card reader, a Memory Stick reader, a Multi Media card reader, a Secure Digital card reader, and a IBM Microdrive reader, wherein the inventive software automatically launches a user interface upon insertion and detection thereof and offers one or more user options to process the data without having to press a button on the scanner.

7) (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 3, further comprising simple control steps for optional directing complex operations of said control circuit and said control software directly from the outside of said apparatus, said steps comprising: a) providing at least one button on said apparatus wherein said button has a function determined by said control software; b) providing an interface for said button to direct said control circuit and said control software.

8) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 7, wherein said image input step further comprises providing a scanner, said scanner comprising: a) a transparent platform for placing items to be scanned, said items comprising photographs, documents, or drawings, and said platform having rectangular dimensions; b) optical scanning hardware for scanning images of said items, wherein said hardware includes a scanning module slidably installed inside said housing, said scanning module being approximately as wide as one of the dimensions of said transparent platform, said scanning module comprising: i) a mechanism and assembly for moving said module along one of the axes of said transparent platform; ii) a bottom light source for emitting light towards said items, iii) an image converter for converting said image of the item into a digital image. c) a closeable top with dimensions slightly larger than the dimensions of said transparent platform, hingedly attached to said housing so that said top covers said transparent platform when closed.

9) (Withdrawn) A method comprising: a) persistently monitoring any monitorable input means of an image acquisition apparatus; b) determining whether said input means have image-containing media therein; c) determining the quantity of image data files in said media; d) selecting at least one image data file from said media; e) transmitting said at least one image data file from said image acquisition apparatus to a computer; f) providing said image data file to a consumer-selected computer application.

10) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 9 further comprising: a) persistently monitoring any buttons on said image acquisition apparatus; b) determining whether any said buttons have been pressed; c) selecting the appropriate consumer-selected computer application to which to provide said image data based on the predefined functions of said buttons.

11) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 10 further comprising: a) determining whether there is a scanner associated with said image acquisition apparatus; b) selecting a set of scanning criteria as chosen by the consumer; and c) scanning an item on the transparent platform of said scanner at said selected set of scanning criteria where there is no media card in said input means.

12) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 11 wherein said consumer-selected computer application is selected from an application to transfer said image data files to an Internet-based professional photograph printing company, an application that launches said consumer's e-mail program and attaches said image data files to an e-mail created by said e-mail program, an application that launches said consumer's fax program and prepares a fax with said image in said fax for said consumer to address, an application to open a printer selection menu to allow said consumer to print said image on a selected printer, an application that archives said image data files in a convenient manner, and an application that presents the image data file to any other application on said consumer's computer for said any other application to use as an input into said any other application.

13) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 12 wherein said consumer can selectively configure said computer application choices.

14) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) persistently monitor any monitorable input means of an image acquisition apparatus; b) determine whether said input means have image-containing media therein; c) determine the quantity of image data files in said media; d) select at least one image data file from said media; e) transmit said at least one image data file from said image acquisition apparatus to a computer; f) provide said image data file to a consumer-selected computer application.

15) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 14 that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) persistently monitor any buttons on said image acquisition apparatus; b) determine whether any said buttons have been pressed; c) select the appropriate consumer-selected computer application to which to provide said image data based on the predefined functions of said buttons.

16) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 15 that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) determine whether there is a scanner associated with said image acquisition apparatus; b) select a set of scanning criteria as chosen by the consumer; and c) scan an item on the transparent platform of said scanner at said selected set of scanning criteria where there is no media card in said input means.

17) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 13 that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) launch an application that allows the consumer to customize which applications are launched with which parameters at the press of which buttons on said image acquisition apparatus.

18) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 14 wherein: a) said persistent monitoring occurs in a process boundary with the kernel driver, low level driver, and high level user interface; b) said program launching application runs in a process separated from said persistent monitoring process; and c) said applications launched by said program launching applications run in their own processes.

19) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 17 wherein: a) said persistent monitoring occurs in a process boundary with the kernel driver, low level driver, and high level user interface; b) said program launching application runs in a process separated from said persistent monitoring process; c) said applications launched by said program launching applications run in their own processes; and d) said button configuration application runs in its own process, separate from said persistent monitoring process.

20) (Cancelled)

21) (Cancelled)

22) (Cancelled)



- 1) (Cancelled)
- 2) (Currently Amended) An image acquisition apparatus comprising: a) one or more digital card reader slots to accept transmittal means for inputting image data into a control circuit within said apparatus; b) transmittal means for sending said image data from said control circuit through the USB system of said computer from one or more digital card reader slots; c) interface means for said control circuit to receive instructions from, and send data to, control software on said computer;
- 3) (Currently Amended) An apparatus as in claim 2, further comprising simple control means for directing complex operations of said control circuit and said control software directly from the outside of said apparatus, said means comprising: a) a series of buttons on said apparatus wherein said buttons have a function determined by said control software indicating that button to direct a scanned image to result in a fax, email, print job or archive command; b) an interface for said button to direct said control circuit and said control software.
- 4) (Previously Presented) An apparatus as in claim 3, wherein said image input means further comprising a flatbed scanner, said scanner containing one or more digital card reader slots which may accommodate at least one of a Compact Memory card reader, a Smart Media card reader, a PC or PCMCIA card reader, a Memory Stick reader, a Multi Media card reader, a Secure Digital card reader, and an IBM Microdrive reader.
- 5) (Cancelled)
- 6) (Previously Presented) An image processing method in an image acquisition apparatus connected to at least one USB equipped computer, comprising: a) an image input step for inputting image data into a control circuit within said apparatus; b) a transmittal step for sending said image data from said control circuit through the USB system of said computer; c) an interface step for said control circuit to receive instructions from, and send data to, control software on said computer upon detection of the insertion of the appropriate media into at least one of a Compact Flash Memory card reader, a Smart Media card reader, a PC or PCMCIA Card reader, a Memory Stick

reader, a Multi Media card reader, a Secure Digital card reader, and a IBM Microdrive reader, wherein the inventive software automatically launches a user interface upon insertion and detection thereof and offers one or more user options to process the data without having to press a button on the scanner.

7) (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 3, further comprising simple control steps for optional directing complex operations of said control circuit and said control software directly from the outside of said apparatus, said steps comprising: a) providing at least one button on said apparatus wherein said button has a function determined by said control software; b) providing an interface for said button to direct said control circuit and said control software.

8) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 7, wherein said image input step further comprises providing a scanner, said scanner comprising: a) a transparent platform for placing items to be scanned, said items comprising photographs, documents, or drawings, and said platform having rectangular dimensions; b) optical scanning hardware for scanning images of said items, wherein said hardware includes a scanning module slidably installed inside said housing, said scanning module being approximately as wide as one of the dimensions of said transparent platform, said scanning module comprising: i) a mechanism and assembly for moving said module along one of the axes of said transparent platform; ii) a bottom light source for emitting light towards said items, iii) an image converter for converting said image of the item into a digital image. c) a closeable top with dimensions slightly larger than the dimensions of said transparent platform, hingedly attached to said housing so that said top covers said transparent platform when closed.

9) (Withdrawn) A method comprising: a) persistently monitoring any monitorable input means of an image acquisition apparatus; b) determining whether said input means have image-containing media therein; c) determining the quantity of image data files in said media; d) selecting at least one image data file from said media; e) transmitting said at least one image data file from said image acquisition apparatus to a computer; f) providing said image data file to a consumer-selected computer application.

10) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 9 further comprising: a) persistently monitoring any buttons on said image acquisition apparatus; b) determining whether any said buttons have been

pressed; c) selecting the appropriate consumer-selected computer application to which to provide said image data based on the predefined functions of said buttons.

11) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 10 further comprising: a) determining whether there is a scanner associated with said image acquisition apparatus; b) selecting a set of scanning criteria as chosen by the consumer; and c) scanning an item on the transparent platform of said scanner at said selected set of scanning criteria where there is no media card in said input means.

12) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 11 wherein said consumer-selected computer application is selected from an application to transfer said image data files to an Internet-based professional photograph printing company, an application that launches said consumer's e-mail program and attaches said image data files to an e-mail created by said e-mail program, an application that launches said consumer's fax program and prepares a fax with said image in said fax for said consumer to address, an application to open a printer selection menu to allow said consumer to print said image on a selected printer, an application that archives said image data files in a convenient manner, and an application that presents the image data file to any other application on said consumer's computer for said any other application to use as an input into said any other application.

13) (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 12 wherein said consumer can selectively configure said computer application choices.

14) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) persistently monitor any monitorable input means of an image acquisition apparatus; b) determine whether said input means have image-containing media therein; c) determine the quantity of image data files in said media; d) select at least one image data file from said media; e) transmit said at least one image data file from said image acquisition apparatus to a computer; f) provide said image data file to a consumer-selected computer application.

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buttons on said image acquisition apparatus; b) determine whether any said buttons have been pressed; c) select the appropriate consumer-selected computer application to which to provide said image data based on the predefined functions of said buttons.

16) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 15 that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) determine whether there is a scanner associated with said image acquisition apparatus; b) select a set of scanning criteria as chosen by the consumer; and c) scan an item on the transparent platform of said scanner at said selected set of scanning criteria where there is no media card in said input means.

17) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 13 that, when executed, direct a computer to: a) launch an application that allows the consumer to customize which applications are launched with which parameters at the press of which buttons on said image acquisition apparatus.

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19) (Withdrawn) Computer-readable media comprising one or more computer-executable instruction sets as in claim 17 wherein: a) said persistent monitoring occurs in a process boundary with the kernel driver, low level driver, and high level user interface; b) said program launching application runs in a process separated from said persistent monitoring process; c) said applications launched by said program launching applications run in their own processes; and d) said button configuration application runs in its own process, separate from said persistent monitoring process.

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